

EVA TROUT - Elizabeth Bowen.

It is odd how this book does not stand up by comparison with 'Bruno's Dream' or 'John Brown's Body'. It seems insufferably longwinded. There are very good things in it, like the passionate but vague feeling of the two women involved in a lesbian attachment that somehow or other a child ought to be produced, but the rest of it seems too mad. Anyway, I would have backed the small boy to miss.

IN.

THE FRENCH LEIUTENANT'S WOMAN - John Fowles.

This seems a foolish enterprise and worked out with very little talent. The last paragraph seems to me x remarkable in its pretentiousness!

OUT.

DR. AMADEUS - Edward Candy.

This is quite disgustingly literary.

OUT.

POOR LAZARUS - Maurice Leitch.

It is curious that for all the farts and the acne this book never comes alive.

OUT.

THREE CHEERS FOR THE PARACLETE - Thomas Keneally.

I have the same objection to this book that I have to 'Monk Dawson' - that it is absurd for a man to enter the Catholic priesthood and feel surprise and shock because he has to accommodate himself to its longstanding beliefs. This, I feel, is simply a very able piece of propaganda for that position; I do not really feel that it is a novel at all.

OUT.

THE SPOILED PRIEST - John Cornwell.

This is an inferior treatment of the same position.

OUT.

THE GOD BOTHERERS - Philip Oakes.

I dislike very much these books in which the mental degradation of the T.V. world is described with

THE GOD BOTHERERS (contd.)

commination and evident relish by people who, one learns from the blurb, are working for television themselves. There is something disingenuous about this that I do not really like. I think that one can detect in the book a certain shallowness and sensationalism.

OUT.

A PIECE OF THE SKY IS MISSING - David Nobbs.

This is the same sort of book as "The God Botherers".

OUT.

PHARAOH'S CHICKEN - Nicholas Wollaston.

I am very unhappy about these books about India, because they are technically novels but, at the same time, I feel they are not quite novels. They are really reports on a foreign country with a primarily political interest. I think they go right over the border into political comment and even propaganda and yet, at the same time, I feel that 'Pharaoh's Chicken' and 'The Reckoning' have a lot of the novelists' art in them. This is not as good a book as 'The Reckoning', but it is very touching and I was constantly reminded of V. S. Naipaul's book on India, which also seems an argument that it is not really a novel. I know this is an unnecessary comment, as this book would not come into the rank of serious contenders, but I wish publishers would have this in mind when they submit the books.

OUT.

THE COST OF LIVING LIKE THIS - James Kennaway.

Tragic, but superficial.

OUT.

THE PLAYROOM - Olivia Manning.

This seems to me an expanded short story and to carry very little weight.

OUT.

TRY ANOTHER COUNTRY - Barbara Rees.

This is contemporary grousing with no individuality.

OUT.

BATTLE OF THE APRIL STORM - Larry Forrester.

Not good enough.

OUT.

THE HIRED MAN - Bragg.

I think I have sent in a previous report on this.
From my point of view I think it not good enough.

OUT.

PASTIME OF A RED SUMMER - Vansittart.)
MASQUE OF A SAVAGE MANDARIN - Robinson.)

I think I have also sent reports on these.

OUT.

KONEK LANDING - Figes.

I wonder how often this particular book has been
written by other people.

OUT.

THE FOOL'S HEART - Lise Roche.

Quite mediocre.

OUT.

A TIME TO KEEP - George Mackay Brown.

I like these stories very much, but I cannot think
that the prize was offered with this kind of short
story book in mind.

OUT.

THE BEASTLY BEATITUDES OF BALTHAZAR - J. P. Donleavy.

A vulgar writer and his content is really like Michael
Arlen.

OUT.

IN THIS HOUSE OF BREDE - Rumer Godden.

OUT.